

It is essential that our committee have the information it needs to evaluate the current delivery system—exposing barriers that prevent collaboration, that prevent networking, that prevent innovation, and that prevent the sharing of resources.

It is my hope that this GAO report will help all policymakers begin to understand where the delivery system is working, where it is not, and offer the recommendations that are so important and so needed to streamline and to modernize it.

I encourage my colleagues to support the amendment.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RETIREMENT OF DR. JAMES ALBERT YOUNG

Mr. REID. Madam President, today I want to recognize and honor an individual who has committed much of his life to the preservation of Western rangeland and its ecosystems. Dr. James Albert Young retired on January 3, 2008, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service after 33 years of dedicated work on issues important to the environmental health of the Great Basin.

The Great Basin is North America's largest desert, encompassing 135 million acres of land between the Rocky and Sierra Nevada Mountains in western North America. It includes parts of Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Oregon, and California. Land in the Great Basin is arid, receiving less than 12 inches of rain annually. Today, population growth, wildfires, and invasive species are reducing the quality of native rangelands at an accelerating rate. Recent studies by the U.S. Geological Survey and others predict that climate change could well be expected to accelerate these changes and associated impacts. Dr. Young's professional life was focused on understanding the specific challenges facing the Great Basin, finding ways to reverse the trends that threaten its environmental health, and educating people about the uniqueness of this beautiful land.

In 1965, Dr. Young started his career with USDA's Agricultural Research

Service as a range scientist for the range and pasture unit in Reno, NV. He served as research leader of that unit from 1986 to 1998 and was known by many as the "Encyclopedia of Western Rangelands." Over the years his expertise and commitment to rangeland issues was recognized through various awards, such as United States Department of Agriculture Scientist of the Year, Weed Science Society of America Award of Excellence, Society for Range Management W. R. Chapline Research Award, Outstanding Achievement Award, and Fellow Award, as well as the Society for Range Management Nevada Section Researcher of the Year Award.

The State of Nevada awarded Dr. Young with the very first Nevada Weed Management Award, which they named the "James A. Young Award," for his tireless work on invasive weed management issues. Dr. Young has authored and co-authored over 700 scientific articles, including many books. His books have received national recognition, some of which include "Collecting, Processing, and Germinating Seeds of Wildland Plants"; "Endless Tracks in the Woods"; "Purshia: The Wild and Bitter Roses"; and "Cattle in the Cold Desert." Dr. Young recently finished a book, "Cheatgrass: Fire and Forage on the Range," which is an illustration of the breadth of knowledge that he has on the most popular weed in the Intermountain West. It is often stated that Dr. Young has probably forgotten more information on the ecology of Western rangelands that most people in resource management will ever learn.

Early in Dr. Young's career he developed the hypothesis that the nature and structure of a wildland plant community is largely controlled by the process that eliminated the previous plant community that occupied the site. Now known as the stand renewal process, this hypothesis is one of his ecological trademarks.

Dr. Young was also an outstanding educator. Over the years, he introduced dozens of high school and college students to the field of range science, some of whom became Area Directors for the Agricultural Research Service. His continued interest in educating natural resource specialists, as well as the general public, on science based management of Natural Resources has been a tremendous achievement over his career.

We owe a great debt to individuals like Dr. Young who, make their life's work protecting our natural world. Thank you, Dr. Young, for all you have done.

GOLD MEDAL FOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Mr. McCONNEL. Madam President, I am proud once again to join my friend and colleague, Senator FEINSTEIN, on a matter involving the promotion of freedom and reconciliation in Burma. Today, we join together in support of

awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi.

When first established in 1776, the Congressional Gold Medal was given to military leaders for their achievements in battle. Since that time, it has become America's highest civilian honor, having been bestowed upon great friends of freedom such as Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Granting Suu Kyi the Gold Medal would continue that same tradition of honoring heroism in the defense of liberty.

For more than 20 years, Aung San Suu Kyi's support for justice and democracy has placed her at odds with the tyranny and oppression of the Burmese junta. She and her supporters have combated the brutality of the junta with peaceful protest and resistance. She has chosen dignity as her weapon, and she has found allies in democracy-loving people around the world to aid her in her struggle.

Even as I speak, Suu Kyi's non-violent fight for democracy continues. Just last week, the Burmese junta announced that it would hold a general election in 2010. However, under the regime's sham plan for democracy, it would not even permit the country's foremost democracy activist, Suu Kyi, to hold public office.

The military junta is fooling no one with its false promises of reform, least of all, Suu Kyi and her allies. After all, she remains under house arrest, as she has for 12 of the last 18 years. That said, as the regime continues to suppress the voices of freedom and peace, it can be sure that there will be those of us who will stand with Suu Kyi and the people of Burma as they continue their struggle for democracy and justice.

By awarding Suu Kyi the Congressional Gold Medal, we are letting the Burmese military junta and the world know that the people of America will continue to speak out in favor of meaningful reform in her country.

It is particularly fitting that today, February 13 is the birthday of Suu Kyi's father. Aung San helped lead the struggle for Burmese independence after World War II, but was assassinated just before its achievement. What could be a more fitting way to honor the memory of a man who fought for freedom than by rewarding his noble daughter for continuing his legacy? In so doing, we reward them both with the promise that the United States will remain committed to the same cause, that of a peaceful and free Burma.

FISA AMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. REED. Madam President, we have had a lengthy debate, and in the end I decided to vote against final passage of S. 2248, the FISA Amendments Act of 2007.

First, I commend Senators ROCKEFELLER and BOND for recognizing immediately that the Protect America